

**Models of Collaboration
Between Workforce Investment and Refugee Resettlement Stakeholders
October 22, 2014
1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. All participants are in a listen-only mode for the duration of today's conference, which is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

Your host for today is Ms. (Amy Shir). Thank you. You may begin.

(Amy Shir): Thank you. Welcome everybody to this Webinar, Models of Collaboration, between workforce investment and refugee resettlement stakeholders. This is part of a technical assistance initiative that the Office of Refugee Resettlement is offering. And this particular technical assistance initiative is called Bridges for Refugees and Asylees. And it's supported by ICF International.

I'd like to welcome our speakers today for you. We will start with Ken Tota who is the Deputy Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement within HHS. We also have (Aparna) (unintelligible) who is a workforce analyst with the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

I am your friendly facilitator, (Amy Shir) with ICF International, and I provide technical assistance on behalf of ORR. I also am joined by Nathan

Ringham, also with ICF. He'll talk to you in a second about how you can ask questions later in the Webinar.

And we're also joined by Paul Costigan and Blake Hamilton with the International Institute of St. Louis. As well as Kimber Burks with the Utah Department of Workforce Services. And last but not least, out in California we've got Michelle O'Camb and Mary Jennings with the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency.

So, we've got some objectives for today. We'll just be speaking for an hour together, so we've got an action packed Webinar full of information. We're going to highlight a models of collaboration report. And we're going to share the link with you a bit later in the Webinar so that you can see this report.

We're going to discuss three highlighted models -- Sacramento, then Utah, and then St. Louis. Different models of collaboration where we're going to explore promising practices and collaborations. And we'd like you to see if there are any elements in these collaborations that you could implement in your communities to improve employment outcomes for refugees.

And now I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Nathan. And he's going to talk to you a bit about using the technology to ask questions later in the Webinar.

Nathan Ringham: Hi everyone. We'll accept questions throughout this Webinar electronically. If you look up at the top of your screen you'll see Q&A in the menu bar that runs along the top of the live meeting platform. When you click on that you will get a popup box that opens up. Type your question in that popup box and then click on the word Ask. We will acknowledge your question. And at the

end of the Webinar we'll have time for Q&A and we'll go over all the questions we receive then.

(Amy Shir): Thanks, Nathan. And now I'd like to open it up to Ken and (Aparna) to provide us with some opening remarks about the ORR and ETA collaboration.

Ken Tota: Great, thank you. Welcome everybody. Thank you very much for joining this Webinar this afternoon. We very much appreciate your interest in looking at models of collaboration.

As many of you probably know, ORR provides new populations with opportunities to maximize the potential in the US, linking refugees to critical resources to assist them in becoming integrated members of American society. For refugees and others served by ORR, finding and holding a job is key to becoming both an integrated member of society and certainly on a path of self-sufficiency.

ORR has been working very hard over the last couple of years in really developing collaboration and partnerships with many of the federal departments and agencies within HHS and ECF. And to that end, our partnership with employment and training administration is really a key to our outreach, and certainly to serving new populations.

In late 2012, ORR and ETA began working on resources to educate both the workforce investment and refugee resettlement stakeholders. These have included fact sheets, Webinars, refugee mapping tools so that many of the employment offices could actually know where refugees are locating throughout the country and the populations coming into the communities. And also models of collaboration guide that we will discuss today.

The three organizations featured today have found unique ways to serve refugees on their path to self-sufficiency. And we really hope that these approaches taken by these organizations will provide you with some food for thought in terms of implementing similar models that could certainly help refugees in your community become self-sufficient and certainly on the path to long term integration. Thank you.

(Amy Shir): Great. (Aparna)?

(Aparna): Hi. Thank you very much for having me here. And it's really rewarding to (unintelligible) more and share the case studies and the way work is being done on the ground. It's one of the most rewarding aspects of my job here and (unintelligible) going on on the ground and being able to share them. So this is something that's been going on, looking for these collaborations for a few years. So, it's great to be here.

I'm going to take a moment just to talk about one thing that's happening in our department for the employment training administration. July of this past year the president just passed the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and it's the first major reform for the nation's job training system in over 15 years. We've (unintelligible). So more to come on that.

But one of the things I wanted to emphasize that would be new in legislation we're going to have more exciting things to share and work through with our partnerships. And strengthen some of the things we've already been hearing about across the country. So if anyone wants to know more about WIOA there's a link later on in the Webinar later on about what's going on with that. (Amy), back to you.

(Amy Shir): Great, thanks guys. So we're going to - in 2012, ORR and ETA began collaborating on refugee employment opportunities. And you can refer to the ORR state letter 13-04 for more information.

And the models of collaboration report is a product of this collaboration. The report highlights three models in which workforce investment and refugee stakeholders are collaborating. Each model contains elements that could be replicated in multiple settings across the country. The models illustrate how, first, a consortium of organizations work together in St. Louis to coordinate services. And second, highly integrated state agency in Utah works across programs and partners.

And third, a Sacramento County agency offers both refugee workforce investment services and - for refugees. So we've got a city model, a state model, a county model, different kinds of collaborations. And we're hoping that some of these elements might be things that you can implement in your community.

You will see the link here for the report. And the other thing is that this PowerPoint deck will be available to you. We will send this to you after the Webinar. So you will have all of these slides with the links and the information. So you don't have to take too copious notes. Next.

So why collaborate? You know, first of all, integrated programs and services can help refugees navigate mainstream services, education, training, and employment in the United States. And workforce investment services are critical for refugees to achieve long term self-sufficiency.

Refugees are assets to employers and their communities. And overall, this collaboration really improves refugee employment outcomes and overall

economic development. And so let's start with the folks from St. Louis, Paul and Blake. Tell us a bit about your collaboration.

Paul Costigan: Okay. Thank you for having us. My name's Paul. I'm here with my colleague Blake. And we'll be telling you a little bit about the International Institute of St. Louis's work with our local workforce investment partners.

Just a little bit of background. We are a large union-based organization that's in the USCRI network. And as you can see, we've had more than 21,000 refugees resettle through us in St. Louis since 1979.

Typical year for us is about - serving about 7500 clients in general with close to 450 job placements all across our various employment programs. And about 1300 people also in our ESOL programs as well. So we're a fairly large agency.

Back in 2002 we started working with our local WIB partners, that's Workforce Investment Board, to help them with translation services for clients they were trying to serve. This eventually evolved to more of a standardized partnership where we went under contract with two of our local WIBs. St. Louis is a little bit more unique in that St. Louis City is its own county, and St. Louis County, which is part of the metropolitan area, is also its own county.

So there are actually two WIBs that are in our metropolitan area. We have, since 2002, contracted with both to provide employment services to the foreign born. Whether it's in adult services, those are people over 18 years or older who are looking for employment, or dislocated workers.

And we also had a youth contract with our local WIB in the past as well. But the relationship, like I said, evolved so that we, you know, are contracted with

our local WIB to provide employment services to the foreign born. And the - it really is centered around the employment services that are going to benefit our clients.

Nathan, if you can turn the page right here. See that - the partnership does have several partners. And a lot of those partners have specific populations that they're working with. One of our partners is St. Louis Community College which is a very large contractor under the St. Louis County WIB.

But there are also other partners that have populations who are veterans, for example, or are working with those populations who have just been released from prison, for example, Urban League is one of the partners, as well as the local division of Workforce Development.

And obviously the goal is permanent employment for our clients. Over the course of a year we place about 100 people a year into employment just through this WIA program. And those are mostly clients who are work authorized immigrants.

Often times they're refugees who have been here for a longer period of time. Who have gained experience in prior jobs that maybe have been laid off from their companies. And they'll come back to us having worked with us in the past.

And one of the key components too is that being - having this partnership with our local WIB allows us to access state training dollars for our clients who are interested in skills training. The institute has a couple of skills training programs inside the agency, for example, a CNA program. But also they - because they're in this program they're eligible for other state approved

training programs if they are interested in HVAC or in truck driving training and things like that. Having this partnership allows us to access those dollars.

And so one of my recommendations, I would say, is that - is to go to a local WIB meeting. Again, that's the Workforce Investment Board. You can probably find them online for the local jurisdiction that you're in, whether it's the county or city. And those are open to the public.

And you can go and talk to the WIB board chair. You know, let them know that, you know, you're working in employment for the foreign born. And see, you know, where you can find, you know, your place in what they're trying to do, which is promote employment in their region. Blake has some further...

Blake Hamilton: Regarding the WIB meetings, at meetings and functions that consortium partners present information about the different programs that they might be running, for instance the recent reallocation of funds through our community college here locally for training programs, we've been able to sort of get on board with those changes early. And been able to make referrals based on our contacts made through the WIB.

Also during those WIB meetings, since we are sitting with folks from the county and government entities who if I have information about new construction projects in the area, we can learn about those. And additionally, working with the city WIB versus the county WIB, the city WIB is now actually allowing us access to some of their programs. And we can actually assist our clients in enrolling into the city's workforce program remotely here at our location.

By registering for their services online our clients actually are getting access to job postings. And actually, Nathan, you can change the slide.

By having access to that information our clients are actually given daily and weekly emails about hot jobs and different job fairs that the WIB might be promoting that week. And recently we've actually been able to negotiate with this city WIB to conduct job fairs isolated just for our clients. So just for refugee and immigrant clients prior to the sometimes chaotic cattle call that can be with sponsored job fairs.

The consortium is also a great place to learn about these upcoming construction projects, as I'd mentioned earlier. For example, St. Louis is going to get an IKEA. We're really excited about that. But one of the big (booms) is for employment. So we're actually learning about their different hiring patterns and the pace that they're going to have for hiring. And we're able to sort of prepare clients with the openings before they really get open to the public.

In this past partnership we've actually been able to place 1200 refugee and immigrants into jobs through our partnership in this consortium. One of the success stories recently as well was a hotel that opened here locally called Magnolia, which received tax increment financing from the city in order to refurbish a historic property downtown.

Since they received those funds they were required to hire through the Workforce Investment Board in the city. Through our partnership with the Workforce Investment Board and a preexisting relationship we had with the general manager of the hotel, we were able to get seven folks hired prior to their opening in July.

We've had seven hired since then and we have four more ready to start this week. So none of those really would have been possible without our strong

relationship with the city WIB, and the access that they provide for high - to utilize multiple resources in the community to find jobs. Instead of just relying on one resource, having many at their disposal.

(Amy Shir): Great. That is tremendous. Thank you so much for sharing and we'll probably have some questions later on. So let's hear about another type of collaboration. Kimber Burks is with us from the Utah Department of Workforce Services.

Kimber Burks: Hello, good afternoon. I hope everyone's doing well. Yes, so I'll just kind of start off by just kind of giving some background. So since the Utah Department of Workforce Services was formed in 1988, there's kind of been this multiple interagency coordination so that would include obviously the refugee and other assistance programs such as TANF, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Workforce Investment Act for Training and Employment Activities, and then Wagner-Peyser.

So since all of these are basically co-located, this has really made coordination between those services and what's provided a little bit more cohesive since it's interagency and we kind of have that close working relationship with each other. You know, we found that we're able to provide the best services to customers, to refugee customers, based on their own kind of individual needs and circumstances, you know, for them to access what's available through workforce services.

There's about 50,000 refugees currently living in Utah. And around 1100 are kind of new arriving every year. So we'll see some refugees coming in. They mostly include places like Iraq and Somalia. Some from Burma, so like the Thailand and Malaysia areas.

We see some refugees from Congolese. And now more recently we're starting to see more from Syria. So we know each comes with their kind of own unique background and have, you know, different needs based on their current situation.

So we really try to provide those services by coordinating with, you know, each agency to see what would best fit the customer's situation. So some of the things that we look at, you know, providing translation services, things like language support. We do work readiness evaluation to kind of help them - help refugees kind of figure out what their skills are for (obtaining) employment.

We connect them by referrals and partnerships with things like domestic violence and mental health service providers. One of the things recently that we've kind of integrated is the use of something called Utah Futures, which includes kind of access to what I kind of call an electronic library for skill building activity. So for example, if a refugee wanted to take a practice test for becoming a citizen, that's something that they could access through there.

So we really try to collaborate with the WIA training services to help them complete things like training and education that, you know, we know are going to help them lead to better paying jobs. Connection to like specific types of employment with our job placement service. And since those services are housed within our American job centers, it kind of makes that connection a little bit easier. So, if you want to turn to the next slide I'll continue on.

So because Utah's refugee population is mostly concentrated kind of in the Salt Lake area, there's about 98% of the refugee population here in Salt Lake. And they are primarily served from one of our American job centers.

You know, DWS looked for those opportunities to partner with organizations in the area to kind of help offer that kind of enhanced coordination for the refugees includes the (LBF) services, so the church helps a lot. The International (Refuge) Committee, places like Catholic Community services. The Asian Association of Utah and then also Salt Lake County Services is a big one as well. So they kind of create a network with other businesses and agencies to ensure that refugees are of the resources in the community to help them be successful.

One of the really successful partnerships that we've, you know, kind of had the opportunity to be a part of over the last two summers is something called the Jumpstart program. And what it is, is it's kind of a collaboration of a partnership put together by the WI Youth Program and one of the school districts within Salt Lake County.

Also what they did is the program allowed for refugee youth an opportunity to complete kind of educational activities over the summer that are tied directly to earning credit that they can then put towards their high school diploma. You know, we know that some of the refugees coming in kind of struggle with being able to complete that coursework and will sometimes get behind. So this provided a really great opportunity for many of these youth to participate in the Jumpstart program over the summer to earn those two credits, which then would assist them in graduating from high school.

So in the summer of 2013 we had 53 youth who completed the program. And then this year, just this summer, we had 47 WI Youth customers complete the program, earning those full two credits. So that was a great outcome for them.

We also had one of the youth who participated in the Jumpstart program. She was from Iraq. A refugee from Iraq came and spoke to our state youth council,

you know, under our workforce investment board. And just kind of discussed per circumstances how she came over. And some of the difficulties that she was having when attending high school and just not understanding the English language.

You know, feeling like she was just kind of sitting in class knowing that she was getting behind, but not really understanding. So it was kind of difficult for her to stay ahead. But she talked a lot about how this Jumpstart program really helped her to be successful in catching up on those credits she needed to stay on track to graduate. And she actually ended up - she actually did graduate and is now in college. So that was a really great opportunity for her. If you want to go to the next slide, I'll just finish up on these.

So one of the important aspects that we do try to keep in mind is the need for refugees to have a connection to education, employment. You know, activities that we know are going to help keep them more focused on promoting positive change. So for example, by providing some of the youth with training and employment opportunities, we're kind of promoting, you know, the gang prevention, drug use.

You know, anti-social behavior that sometimes can come into play when you've got refugee youth, and specifically (males) who are not feeling connecting to the community that they're trying to assimilate in. And just kind of filling that disconnect. So we've really tried to make sure that that employment and training aspect is there. And more specifically in the youth program to make sure that they have the resources like tutoring. Being able to engage in leadership development activities. You know, kind of help them with that resettlement process.

There's also a Refugee Service. Refugee Service has recently hired what's called a women's services coordinator that basically collaborates with community resources like Girl Scouts. Kind of help refugees get involved with crisis services. The Young Women's Christian Association, mainstream - other mainstream women's services. Just to kind of help them fill that connection and know what resources are available in their community to help the refugees make connections throughout their community.

You know, we are trying to keep that regular communication going with those other agencies so we know, you know, events that are coming up. Things that refugees can connect to and kind of navigate that path through the education training. And then eventually obtaining employment.

So the other thing I think that's been really important is we've received and always have kind of had a lot of positive support from our executive director's office. To make sure that we are providing the necessary resources and tools for refugees to help them be more successful.

So, you know, because we're all kind of working from the same building, even sometimes on the same floor we're able to keep that line of communication going about what resources are needed, things that we can connect them to. And then just eventually providing a better pathway for knowing what the refugee can participate in to become more successful, so.

(Amy Shir): Great. Kimber, great work in Utah. Great model of co-location. And, you know, the wonderful work that can happen when you are literally like a couple offices away from the state refugee coordinator. So...

Kimber Burks: Yes, cubicles. It's been great.

(Amy Shir): Cubicles. Exactly. So let's go to California and hear the good work that's being done in Sacramento. We've got Michelle and Mary online.

Michelle O'Camb: So, this is Michelle O'Camb. And I'm going to go ahead and start with some background. The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency is a joint powers agency of the city and county of Sacramento. As such, our governing board is made up of county board of supervisors and city council members.

We do receive a lot of support from management and our boards with regards to refugee program and the integrated services. Our annual budget here in our office is about \$80 million a year. We're home to about 650 employees. We administer anywhere from 35 to 45 grants per year -- federal, state, private, and foundation.

Our largest grants being our formula grants which are Workforce Investment Act funding, Head Start funding, Community Service (Block) Grant funding, and then of course the (rest) in (TA) formula funding. We typically subcontract around \$35 million of our budget to school districts, governmental agencies, community based organizations, vocational training providers, vendors providing services anywhere from translation to interpretation to computer literacy and so forth.

We are unique. And when I hear Utah the Department of Workforce Development, we seem very similar, although we are a joint power agency, we're not a seed agency. Unique in that the - most of our programs with the exception of our Head Start program, our (unintelligible) and our Workforce Development department which does help us foster relationships with all the staff. And ensures kind of a cross awareness of all the programs and services.

And more often than not it does result in direct interaction, grading and leveraging program funds, if you will. That it is also the designated America job center of California in the Sacramento region for the local Workforce Investment area. And we've been providing integrated services as such to over 35,000 job seekers a year. As well as 800 employers a year.

And SETA has administered the ORR funded refugee and social service and targeted assistance grants, employment programs for the county of Sacramento since the early 80s serving newly arriving refugees resettling in Sacramento. And I think since the late 70s, Sacramento has resettled almost 55,000 refugees. And that's not counting the secondary migrants.

We have historically been one of the top three counties in the state in terms of numbers of newly arriving and resettling refugees. As such, this has really resulted in a very experienced service provider network. And finally, to (unintelligible) service delivery system.

On an annual basis, SETA partners with and contracts with five to seven refugee program providers for employment and acculturation services. Many of whom have had long-standing relationships with SETA as either refugee providers or funded under other programs. And some for, you know, almost 20 years.

As such, we are experience - a number of years ago we experienced a significant reduction in our funding. There are a couple of reasons for that. One was 9/11. There was a reduction in the number of arrivals. At some point there was also a change in the formula for allocation where they used to - ORR used to look at five-year arrival numbers. That was reduced to two-year arrival numbers in the formula, which absolutely makes sense. Because you

want resources targeted to the most urgent need. So it made sense, but it also did impact our funding.

As a result of that, we realize we really needed to be creative in maximizing our resources. And since our job centers provide universal access to all, specifically targeting special populations, which our refugee population is considered special, we recognize an opportunity to braid our (unintelligible) (T) funded services with WIA funded services. To maximize the provision of services to refugees.

The intent of this coordination was not to duplicate the service by any means, but really intended to enhance services. This really began and continues with requiring our (unintelligible) (T) of funded program providers to partner with our - with at least one job center within our county. And we did this by incorporating language in their contracts which would - did require them - does require them to provide an orientation and a tour of a job or training center to all the refugee clients that they serve.

Although a locally mandated collaboration and requirement within their contract, it really has resulted in a strong relationship being developed between our refugee program providers and job centers. And to be quite honest, I - if the language wasn't in the contract I believe they would still take the - our refugees to the one-stop centers and job centers throughout the county. Because it really does make sense in maximizing resources. And providing additional - access to additional services that aren't available through the refugee program.

We can probably go on to the next slide. Our system is home to - when I mentioned the Sacramento Works, American Job Center System here in Sacramento, we're home to five Sacramento job centers, along with eight

Sacramento works training centers. As a job center operator in the region we are here to unite businesses, labor, education, public agencies, to ensure that qualified and trained workers are available to meet the needs of the region's economy.

Some of our refugee providers have co-located staff at some of our centers throughout our system. One of our refugee providers actually hosts and operates a training center within our system. That's enhancing an already robust language capacity. Within our system there are over 15 languages spoken.

Our system model does focus on work preparedness and attainment of industry recognized credentials and certificates from high demand industry sectors. Our centers are geographically distributed throughout the county. We are a large, sprawling county.

And they do work with one another to offer - in career coaching, labor market and career exploration basic to advanced education as well as occupational field training opportunities. Mary's going to - I'm going to pass the baton to Mary and she's going to talk a little bit about a - one of the activities that we really - that has integrated well with our refugee program.

Mary Jennings: We're changing chairs.

Michelle O'Camb: Yes.

Mary Jennings: Okay, so you can go ahead and go to the next slide. And just talking about some of the specific ways that our refugee program collaborates with our American Job Centers. One of the main ways is through an on-the-job training

program or OJT. Three of our refugee program service providers are also WIA funded OJT providers.

And about 120 refugees per year, refugees that are enrolled with employment service providers, enter into OJT opportunities. Of our refugee employment, the three that are also OJT providers, 30% to 40% of their OJT enrollees are refugees. And to quote a provider, it's really because, "They're great candidates, they're motivated to work, they're often very flexible, and they stay longer in jobs."

And just to give you a few examples of the refugee customers that get enrolled in OJT. So stories, one was - one refugee client was interviewed to become a machine operator for a machine operator position in a textile company. And the employer was so impressed with the willingness to work and the quick ability to learn that he enrolled him in the OJT program in 2011. And now that person is still working there and makes \$16, which is fairly good wage here in Sacramento.

Another refugee client got a job or enrolled in janitorial OJT, the furniture store, in 2013. She received two raises within a year and monthly bonuses. And she's now moving up to help decorate the showroom floor. Yet another enrolled in production OJT in 2013. This refugee reports having a stable income, family self-sufficiency, and even savings. And he's learning several production lines of work because in this OJT they get to move to different departments every four to five months and learn new things.

So those are just, you know, kind of real specific direct stories of how refugees can benefit from OJT programs and actually do very well. Just two other quick ways that we have collaboration. One is with scholarships for directly for refugees for vocational training at our one-stop career centers. We

had to cut this program when our funding was cut, but we're reinstating it this year. It was a very popular program when we had it before.

A refugee client will co-enroll in refugee employment and WIA services. The refugee provider does the assessment and identifies the candidate for the scholarship and the training - the vocational training. And then connects with a point person at one of our career centers.

The main person happens to be a former refugee himself. And together they help to get that person into a vocational training program, calling upon the scholarship funds to pay for it. But of course there's also universal scholarship funding at all the career centers for people who are eligible and suitable for training. So refugees can always take advantage of that too.

Just one last small thing. We have a monthly refugee forum here in Sacramento with - oh, we meet every other month with resettlement agencies, employment providers. And our public workforce system representatives also attend that and were able to discuss the various issues that arise with regard to employment of refugees.

And, you know, at the last forum we actually had two of our (Sac) Works job center supervisors speak to the refugee providers to, you know, remind them of the services at the one-stop. And, you know, just - there's a really high level of interest, including among resettlement agencies in the career centers. So those are just ways that we all kind of collaborate and integrate here in Sacramento. I think that's about it.

(Amy Shir): Thank you so much, Michelle and Mary. And thanks guys for sharing personal success stories. It's so nice to really hear on a personal level, you

know, the successful outcomes that you're achieving and what's happening in the community. That's great.

So just to summarize some of the themes across these models, you know, bringing organizations together. You know, and facilitating regular communications and the collaboration and maintaining the collaboration. You know, and bringing partners to do what they do best together. So that everyone's complimenting their service together to achieve these great outcomes.

Also, we see partnering here, serious partnering, of workforce centers and refugee service providers. So that refugees are provided with translation services and orientations and access to all of the great things that the one-stop and American Job Center services provide.

And ultimately, you know, at the end of the day we see better employment outcomes when we come together in this fashion and collaborate for a joint purpose. So what I'd like to do is we're going to now open the discussion. Nathan's going to talk - he's going to read some of the questions that have already come in, but please feel free to type your question in. Nathan will remind you how to do that.

Also, I've seen that a question was asked about getting the slides. We will send the slide deck to you after the Webinar takes place. You can't print it right here from live meeting, but you will get that in your inbox. So Nathan, what kind of questions do we got?

Nathan Ringham: Just as a reminder for everyone, if you have questions throughout the remainder of the Webinar, click on the Q&A icon in your toolbar for the top

and the popup box will pop up for you to type your question in. and we'll see if we have time to get to it.

We actually have quite a few already. So I'll start with one for Blake and Paul in St. Louis. Somebody noted it looks like you guys are doing a great job of partnering with the city and that helps you to find employers who are willing to employ your clients. What programs do you have for training refugees or immigrants themselves to get ready for the jobs that are available in the community?

Paul Costigan: Okay, we actually have kind of a two-tier approach. We have general training for really all of our refugees, especially the ones that we settle, but open to anyone which we call Job Readiness class. And that is - that's four weeks of class that the clients learn about, you know, communicating with co-workers and communicating with their supervisors. Interview skills, resume writing, and understanding paychecks and things like that.

But Blake also has some information on the technical skills trainings that we have, too.

Blake Hamilton: We have developed three separate trainings for skills based trainings through partnership with several employers. The one that comes to mind that is sort of really born out of true partnership with the employers that we're working with is our housekeeping training.

We currently work with about 23 area hotels so we're able to go to a variety of partners and get materials. And we had space located - location off of our main site here where we were able to create basically a mock hotel room. And through the efforts of volunteers and some interns and AmeriCorps, we were

able to provide instruction in housekeeping. Sort of the skills that are used generally across the hotels that we partner with for housekeeping.

So we had donations of two queen beds. We've had a mockup of a bathroom without plumbing. Cleanest bathroom you've ever seen. But we were able to train a lot of the skills that they train on the first day. And train the vocabulary. And it really helped low English clients who would maybe not have any work experience in that field or a lot of English, but that they come with that certificate.

We would grant a certificate after finishing the training. If they could come to an employer with that certificate they were much more likely to be considered for positions. Additionally we have a sewing training which we similarly constructed through partnership with a great employer for us. And we also have a certified nursing assistant training which is a little bit different. But it is a state certified training program for nursing assistants so they can go to work in nursing homes prior to - or once they completed their classroom training clinical hours and state certification tests.

Nathan Ringham: Great. Thanks so much for that answer. Kimber, we have a question for you. You mentioned an online training resource and this person wants to know if you can repeat the name and any details about how it might be accessed by others.

Kimber Burks: Yes. So what I had mentioned, we - Utah just recently came out with something called their own Utah futures. We were using a previous model from the State of Oregon. And recently designed our own Utah futures. So that's kind of a career management online tool for customers to use. So what's in that is something - it's a learning express library.

And basically what it is, is kind of an online resource of literally hundreds of modules and skill building activities and examples that people can use. So when I give you an example of taking a kind of a practice test of what a citizenship test would actually be to see if someone would be able to pass it.

There's also things like GED practice tests. If someone wanted to learn a little bit more about skills they need for things like Excel, there's modules for that. So it is kind of specific to people who use the Utah futures Web site, then being able to access the learning express library. But that's kind of some of the things that it offers.

(Amy Shir): Kimber - I just want to follow-up on that, Nathan. Can people around the country access that Web site also?

Kimber Burks: Well, so if they were to log into the Utahfutures.org, you know, because then they use that to kind of create their - it's called a workspace of what type of employment they're looking for, what type of schooling would they need to find that type of employment. What kind of skills. Kind of give them a list of things to prepare them for looking for employment. That's how the users access the learning express library.

(Amy Shir): Great, thank you.

Nathan Ringham: For Mary and Michelle in Sacramento, somebody asked if you could say more about the OJT program and how it works for refugees. And whether you make arrangements with any employer based on the job seeker's work interest. Or do you have certain partnerships - or partnerships with certain employers only?

Michelle O’Camb: So we - as I mentioned, we received WI funding but we also do receive funding from the county of Sacramento. TANF, when it rolls out to the county, it’s Cal Works. So, we have Cal Works funding that supports us with the OJT program as well. We’re able to fund about 500 OJT slots a year. And about - we mentioned there are three providers that are refugee program providers as well as OJT providers. So probably three or four other OJT providers.

What we find is that our three OJT providers, because of their - our refugee program providers are OJT providers. It’s a great link. They have long established, well established employer bases. A lot of return business. Job orders come through and what they do is they will match skill.

Obviously there has to be a justification for training so there has to be some skill gap to be able to develop and enter into an OJT opportunity which is usually easy to justify. And what we find is that our refugees are very competitive. OJT is - you’re working with an employer who, when they enter into an OJT contract, they are actually hiring that trainee, their part of their payroll and so forth.

And the way the OJT works is there is a reimbursement in just the wage, not payroll taxes or so forth. But the wage paid to the trainee during the training period. And there is - in signing the contract there is a commitment to hire someone at the conclusion of the training period, which then enters that client into an (unsubsidized) employment situation.

So it really has been a great program for our refugees here in Sacramento. Like Mary said, we also have access - they have access to scholarships here in Sacramento. I know we didn’t really mention it, but we here in Sacramento

have seen a real spike in SIVs, Special Immigrant Visa. Individuals coming into Sacramento this year.

We imagine it's a result of the drawing down of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are a great candidate for OJTs and/or scholarships, or other resources and services available through the one-stop system.

Woman: And this is (unintelligible) from Department of Labor. If people want to know a little bit more of on-the-job training we have a wonderful (unintelligible) technical systems platform to kind of give you an idea of what job training means and some background on that. And I can send that link to you, (Amy) and Nathan, later.

(Amy Shir): Great. We'll send that out.

Woman: That's great.

Nathan Ringham: Let's see. Looks like we've probably got time for one more question. I know there's been a lot of questions coming in here at the end and we'll try to make note of all of those and respond to folks directly.

For our last question it's actually addressed to all the organizations participating today. This person is curious about how the workforce centers or American Job Centers work with the refugee customers who aren't able to navigate the system or, quote, hang in there.

In Colorado, the workforce centers are designed to support who they call self-placers. Customers who are adept at navigating systems, paperwork, multiple new staff members works out the orientation, appointments, et cetera. Do your

collaborations work best for these sorts of customers? Or, are they working with all levels of refugee job seekers?

Blake Hamilton: So this is Blake in St. Louis. I just want to start off by saying that we really expanded our partnership with the city Workforce Investment recently. Where they actually came in and did training for our staff and volunteers to show them how to assist our refugee and immigrant clients in registering for their services. So that, you know, initially navigating that process is very difficult for them to go down on their own and sift through dozens and dozens of screens, filling out information. But they were flexible with having us do registration to a certain point here.

In the end, though, once they finished their registration at our site they would need to go physically to the Workforce Investment Board office to complete their registration. And so we really have to reserve that for our clients who have a high level of English. Who are more comfortable navigating those kinds of systems on their own. But our hope is that we'll be able to expand the service for lower level, moderate, medium level English speakers in the near future.

Kimber Burks: This is Kimber. I was just going to add to that to kind of say that I think one of the things that has been really beneficial -- well, two things, really -- is we have our refugee team of specific case managers who work directly with our refugee population. So they're really hands on.

And like I said, because the majority of the population that we're serving is downtown Salt Lake, we have multiple centers where those refugee case managers are located. That they can come in and, you know, if they need assistance with things like applying for jobs, doing application for training,

they can take them right into the job connection centers, sit down with them. Figure those things out.

I think another thing that's been really beneficial is through our WI Youth program the refugees have an opportunity to receive tutoring services. So if they're in (ESO) classes we do, you know, the (TAB) assessment to see what level they're really at. So if they're at a third or fourth grade level through the tutoring services, we've seen some of them even jump up to an eighth or ninth grade level just in less than a year's time because of that connection we were able to make with the tutoring services. So that's been really great.

(Amy Shir): And Nathan, I probably should jump in though before Sacramento answers so we can finish this off at the top of the hour. Everyone, we are going to forward your questions to the speakers. And this is a very supportive community so I suspect you'll get good answers in a very timely fashion.

Just wanted to show you some resources for follow-up. The ORR employment resources page where you can find the models of collaboration report. And also the recording of this Webinar will also be there. Also, ORR state level 13-04 which details some of the collaborative efforts between ORR and ETA. Also, check out ETA's workforce. I guess is that (queue) 3-1 Web site? (Aparna) would know.

(Aparna) Workforce 3-1, yes. Workforce31.org.

(Amy Shir): Three-one, very good. An online interactive communications and learning platform designed to build capacity of the workforce investment system. And then (Aparna) also mentioned ETA's WIOA Web site which provides background information and news on developments with the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

We really appreciate your participation. Look out for the slide decks to be emailed to you and for your questions to be answered. And please do not hesitate to contact ORR and ETA and the speakers for more information.
Good afternoon, everyone.

Coordinator: Thank you. This concludes today's conference. Participants may disconnect at this time. Speakers, please stand by.

END